

DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

18th NOVEMBER, 2008

At a Meeting of the Policy Committee held on 18th November, 2008:

PRESENT The Mayor (Councillor C.M. Hebditch) and Councillors R.M. Biggs, V. Black and Trevor Jones (Chairman).

APOLOGIES for absence were received from Councillors M.A. Allwood, D.J. Barrett, T.C.N. Harries and L.M. Phillips.

22. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 16th September, 2008, adopted by Council on 23rd September, 2008, were taken as read and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

23. **DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL – CORPORATE PLAN 2008-11**

Further to Minute 21 the Committee received and noted a letter dated 20th October, 2008 from the Chief Executive to Dorset County Council responding to the Council's comments on its Corporate Plan for the period 2008-11.

24. **REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

(a) **Dorchester Arts Centre**

The Committee considered the appointment of a representative on the Dorchester Arts Centre Board of Management following the resignation of Councillor A.J. Lyall. The Town Clerk had given prior notification of the matter to all Members of the Council inviting expressions of interest in filling the vacancy and it was

RESOLVED

That Councillor C.M. Hebditch be appointed as the Council's representative on the Dorchester Arts Centre Board of Management for the remainder of the current Council Year.

(b) **Transition Town Dorchester**

The Committee considered a letter dated 15th October, 2008 from the Chairman of Transition Town Dorchester inviting the Council to appoint a representative to its core group and it was

RESOLVED

That the invitation be accepted and that a volunteer be sought at the next Meeting of the Council.

25. **ACCOUNTS AUDIT MEMORANDUM: REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE**

Further to Minute 13 the Committee received and noted a copy of the Accounts Audit Memorandum in its final form. No material changes had been made to the draft version considered by the Committee at Minute 13 but the document had not been finalised until 27th October, 2008 following the completion of the audits of the Dorchester Markets Joint Committee and the Dorchester Joint Burial Committee.

26. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Town Clerk and the Financial Service Provider submitted a draft revision of the Council's Treasury Management Policy.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED

That consideration of this matter be deferred to the next Meeting of this Committee and that, in the meantime, the Financial Service Provider be requested to assemble information on the value of the Council's cash holdings at various times over the last three years to enable a decision to be taken on the advisability of investing in more than one financial institution.

27. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and noted the Council's Management Accounts for the period ended 31st October, 2008.

28. **INVESTMENTS**

It was

RESOLVED

That this matter be deferred to the next Meeting of the Committee and that it be considered in parallel with the revised Treasury Management Policy and the additional information referred to at Minute 26 above.

29. **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – PUBLICATION SCHEME**

The Committee noted that the Information Commissioner required the adoption by 1st January, 2009 of a new Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Town Clerk submitted a copy of the model scheme issued by the Information Commissioner, which was required to be adopted without modification, and a suggested guide as to what information was available which was also required to be produced.

It was

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That the model Publication Scheme as now submitted be adopted.
- (2) That the Guide to Published Information as now submitted be approved.

30. **CODES OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES**

The Committee considered a copy of a consultation paper on this matter, the latest in the series generated by the Local Government Empowerment White Paper 'Communities in Control: Real people, real power' on which comments were invited by 24th December, 2008.

It was

RESOLVED

That no comments be submitted.

31. **INTERNAL AUDIT**

As an urgent item the Committee considered the report of the Council's Internal Auditor dated 14th November, 2008. There were no matters which gave rise to particular concern but it was

RESOLVED

That a copy of the report be forwarded to all Members of the Council and that they be afforded the opportunity to comment or ask questions on it at the next Council Meeting.

32. **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

It was

RESOLVED

That in view of the fact that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the following matter which includes personal financial information the public and representatives of the press be excluded from this meeting during its discussion.

33. **BAD DEBTS**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk and the Financial Service Provider recommending the writing-off of thirteen bad debts in the total sum of £7,019.71 together with a list of debts and credits written off by the Town Clerk in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.3 in a net total of £38.23.

It was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the thirteen bad debts identified in the report in the total sum of £7,019.71 be written-off.
- (2) That the list of debts and credits written off by the Town Clerk in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.3 in a net total of £38.23 be noted.
- (3) That the Financial Service Provider be requested to undertake an investigation into the VAT position of outside bodies contributing towards the costs of providing Christmas illuminations.

Chairman